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Josiah Culbertson of Penna. - Virginia -
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With compliments of
L. R. Culbertson, Author of
The Genealogy of The Culbertson Family.

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Some years before the Revolutionary War broke out the elder Mr. Culbertson removed with his family to North Carolina. While residing here Josiah and one of his brothers were in the army of George Tryon, where defeated the insurgents in 1770. After this the family removed into South Carolina where Mr. Culbertson was married in 1774, to a daughter of Col. John Thomas. About this time the Cherokees commenced war upon the frontier of South Carolina and forces were raised to repel their excursions. Mr. Culbertson volunteered in the company of Capt. Thomas, his brother-in-law and served fourteen weeks in the Cherokee country. During their campaign a party of fifty men, of whom Mr. Culbertson was one, was sent out to collect some cattle of the Cherokees, for the sustenance of the army. They had not proceeded more than a mile and a half from the main body of the army when they were surrounded by al large body of Indians, far superior to them in number. The whites immediately took post upon a hill, which gave them a great advantage over the foe, and enabled them to keep them in check. The Indians at the command of their chief rode a rush up the hill with tomahawk in hand, and were as often driven back by the murderous fire of the whites. The firing was heard by the main army and relief was immediately sent, and the Indians fled, leaving forty-seven dead on the ground-- of the whites three were killed and Maj. Downs and Capt. Lacey were mortally wounded and afterwards were on their way to attack the main army when they encountered the party.

Josiah Culbertson was in company with Maj. Parsons and Cowen when the celebrated Cherokee chief, Big Acorn, was taken and afterwards killed in attempting to escape. Mr. Culbertson being raised on the frontier was one of the most active and effective scouts of his day. He was generally detached as a spy on the movements of the enemy, and frequently had his comrade shot down at his side.

When the Revolutionary War broke out he joined the Whigs and was actively engaged in most of the campaigns of South Carolina. Early in the War Governor Rutledge of South Carolina, sent a large quantity of ammunition into the then back country to enable the Whigs to keep the Tories in check. It was placed under care of Col. Thomas in ninety six district, who kept it at his house under a guard of twenty-five men-- a body of Tories under the command of one Col. Moore of North Carolina attempting to take it, made an attack on the house of Col. Thomas, at the commencement of which Col. Thomas and the guard took to flight leaving the women of the family and Mr. Culbertson who refused to retreat into the house. Mr. Culbertson kept up a fire on the Tories so fatally and rapidly (by aid of one of the women) that the Tories were compelled to retreat, leaving several of their horses. After the retreat of the Tories Mr. Culbertson and the woman concealed the ammunition in the woods and it was subsequently delivered to Gen Sumter, who was heard afterwards frequently to say that he used the same ammunition in the skirmishes at Rocky Mount and the Hanging Rock.

Soon after this a notorious Tory Captain, called "Plundering Samuel Brown", took Col. Thomas the father-in-law of Mr Culbertson prisoner, and carried him together with his negroes and horses to the British, and also threatened to burn Mr Culbertson's house with his family and abused Mrs. Culbertson very much. This [illegible] determined Mr Culbertson [illegible]

getting upon his track pursued him in company with Capt. Hallowell and Studman and Mr. [illegible]eal and Mr. McIlhenny and came upon him at Dr. Thompsons, an Uncle of the late Judge Thompson of this county, where he had stopped to refresh himself and his men. The party crossed without shot at the house and after having concealed sometime Brown stepped out of the house into the yard and was shot dead by Mr. Culbertson, and his men taking alarm immediately fled. Brown was an active and shrewd man and the terror of the women and children wherever his name was known.

Mr. Culbertson was at the siege of Savannah when an attempt was made by the Americans and the French to take that place by storm, their force consisting of a Platoon of Regulars in front and a Platoon of Militia close in the rear.

A cannon loaded with a ball, together with bars of lead cut into small pieces was fired from the British works. The ball struck the head of the Commanding Officer of the regulars, severing a portion of his head from his body, his brains flying in every direction when the officer fell into the arms of Mr Culbertson. The young men bearing the officer up, one upon each side were wounded by scattering pieces of lead, a portion of the contents of the cannon passed through the hair and clothes of Mr. Culbertson.

At the taking of South Carolina by the British and Tories the liberty party fled to North Carolina where Mr. Culbertson became acquainted with the late Col. Isaac Shelby, once Governor of Kentucky and here too he became acquainted with Col. Clark of Georgia. With these officers Mr. Culbertson formed an intimate acquaintance and was the warm friend, confident of Gov. Shelby, ~~the whom which~~ who appointed him as the most suitable person to select the ground upon which to bring on an engagement with the enemy and placed under his command a flanking party with so much adroitness and resolution that the result was a total discomfiture and defeat on the part of the Tories.

Mr. Culbertson also acted in the capacity of a spy under Shelby at the battle of Cedar Springs. Some of the Tories who were acquainted with Mr. Culbertson piloted Col. Ferguson to his (Culbertson's) farm where they destroyed everything they could, after feeding their horses with his corn and oats made a bonfire of his fences-- killed his hogs and cattle, plundered his house, abused Mrs. Culbertson and took from her even her finger rings and picked her pockets, finally rode off the horses, thus leaving the family destitute of the means of sustenance.

Ferguson then moved to King's Mountain. Culbertson was in Shelby's regiment and was commanded to take possession of an elected piece of land for which Capt. R. [illegible] Fought hard, but Culbertson pressed so close upon him as to compel him to give way and conceal himself behind some large rocks, where Culbertson shot him in the hand when the Tories all gave way and rallied their forces against Col. Cleveland's regiment, but they were received with so much warmth and resolution from that quarter with rifle balls, that they were again repulsed and began to surrender, when Ferguson attempted to make his escape.

Culbertson, a few days previous having had a description of him through the instrumentality of some prisoners, was at that moment in the act of priming his rifle to shoot when Ferguson came in view and was shot at by two individuals, and fell dead from his horse.

Some weeks previous to this event, Culbertson, acting in the capacity of a spy, fell in with the enemy, while in a moving position and was so near Ferguson that he could have powder burned him.

Culbertson was in the seige of 96 as well as in most of the engagements with the Tories in the back Country. At one time the Tories had possession of the neighborhood where he lived. Then he and three other persons went into the settlement of the Tory Camps. Culbertson was taken sick in the mean time, at the house of a friend. The Tories being informed of this fact, determined on taking him and 25 of them set out in the night, but when they arrived within a short distance of the house where Culbertson was, he got intimation of the fact and made his escape before their eyes, they being afraid to attack him, leaving, however, all his clothes behind, except the shirt on his back. After this event, the Tories became so much enraged that upon entering the house they vent their hellish spleen and malice upon a young brother, then but a lad, by cutting him with their swords in a brutal and shocking manner. The lad in order to save himself from the lacerating blows, which the Tories were inflicting upon him, took shelter behind Mrs. Culbertson (?) holding up his hands that his head might escape the blows, but his arms were so cut to pieces that large particles of bone were found in his shirt sleeves and this ends the Fiend like tragedy upon the part of the Tories upon that occasion.

The Faithful rifle with which Culbertson saved the Magazine and the lives of many individuals was carried by him throughout the American Revolution is still in the possession of his youngest son.

In 1810 Mr. Culbertson moved to this State and settled in the forks of White River where he resided until his death. One of his sons was killed in 1813 by the Indians. In 1827 he lost his wife. He had been in a helpless and feeble condition for several years past. The Spark of patriotism burned in his bosom to the last, during his last sickness he talked with grateful remembrance of his officers, "Shelby and Clark".

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